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US prosecutor agrees to seek dismissal of Adams charges under pressure, sources say

By Sarah N. Lynch
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New York City Mayor Eric Adams attends an event in New York City, U.S., February 13, 2025. REUTERS/David 'Dee' Delgado/File Photo [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)

Summary

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- Acting deputy attorney general gave 1-hour deadline for prosecutors to decide who will seek to dismiss Adams case
- Attorneys in meeting contemplated resigning en masse
- Veteran prosecutor Ed Sullivan volunteered to dismiss charges

WASHINGTON, Feb 14 (Reuters) - A U.S. federal prosecutor agreed on Friday to file a motion to dismiss criminal corruption charges against New York City Mayor Eric Adams to spare other career staff from potentially being fired for refusing to do so, sources briefed on the matter told Reuters.

U.S. prosecutor agrees to seek dismissal of Adams charges under pressure, sources say Reuters

Acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove told the department's career public integrity prosecutors in a meeting on Friday that they had an hour to decide among themselves who would file the motion, the sources said.

The volunteer was Ed Sullivan, a veteran career prosecutor, who agreed to alleviate pressure on his colleagues in the department's public integrity section, two sources said. U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi told Fox News on Friday afternoon that it was her "understanding it is being dismissed today."

"This is not a capitulation-this is a coercion," one of the people briefed on the meeting later told Reuters. "That person, in my mind, is a hero."

Sullivan's decision came after the attorneys in the meeting contemplated resigning en masse, rather than filing the motion to dismiss, another source briefed on the matter told Reuters. There are approximately 30 attorneys in the Public Integrity Section.

Six senior Justice Department officials, including Manhattan's top federal prosecutor and the acting head of the Public Integrity Section John Keller, resigned on Thursday rather than comply with Bove's order to dismiss the case.

The departures reflect a growing resistance from career Justice Department officials to efforts by President Donald Trump to overhaul the agency to end what he calls its weaponization against political opponents.

Critics say Trump's changes threaten to subject criminal prosecutions to political whims.

Manhattan's U.S. Attorney Danielle Sassoon, who was temporarily leading the office, was the first to resign on Thursday, after Bove earlier in the week ordered her to drop the corruption charges against Adams so that he could help the Trump administration carry out its crackdown on illegal immigration.

Adams, a Democrat, has previously argued he was targeted by former President Joe Biden's administration for criticizing its immigration policy.

Sassoon resisted, telling Bove that the law did not support his demands for a dismissal, and she resigned.

Bove then ordered top public integrity officials in Washington to dismiss the case. They too refused.

Thursday's resignations sparked comparisons from legal experts to the "Saturday Night Massacre" in 1973, when senior Justice Department officials resigned after refusing President Richard Nixon's order to fire the special counsel investigating the 1972 break-in by Republican operatives at the Democratic headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington.

On Friday, Hagan Scotten, one of the New York-based prosecutors on the case, also tendered his resignation, telling Bove there was no valid reason to justify dismissing the charges and that he would never comply with the order to do so.

Scotten did not respond to a request for comment.

Chad Mizelle, chief of staff to the attorney general, said the decision to dismiss Adams' indictment "is yet another indication that this DOJ will return to its core function of prosecuting dangerous criminals, not pursuing politically motivated witch hunts."

"The fact that those who indicted and prosecuted the case refused to follow a direct command is further proof of the disordered and ulterior motives of the prosecutors," he said in a statement. "Such individuals have no place at DOJ."

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